

PRESS RELEASE



November 1, 2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: Gary Miller – Seal Beach Mayor

I-405 Widening Project

At the November 8, 2013, Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) Board of Directors meeting, it is very likely the Board will consider changing the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Project. At the September 23 Board meeting, the Board unanimously voted to go forward with Alternative #1 (one additional general purpose lane in both directions on the I-405 between Euclid Ave. and the county line with Los Angeles County). However, a majority of the Board voted to continue consideration of toll lanes and discontinue consideration of Concept "B" (modified Alternative 2) which would add two general purpose lanes in both directions, except from Valley View Street to the county line where only one general purpose lane would be added. Board members Supervisor Nguyen, Supervisor Moorlach, Huntington Beach Mayor Pro Tem Harper and I voted to discontinue consideration of toll lanes and continue consideration of Concept "B."

New Federal legislation (MAP-21) dictates if operation of a carpool lane (HOV lane) that allows low emission and energy efficient vehicles becomes degraded (congested during peak traffic hours), then a state must take action to improve traffic flow. On July 31 in response to the legislation, Caltrans submitted a required degradation report and action plan to the Federal government. Toll lanes and/or increasing carpool occupancy from two to three people per vehicle are two possible strategies, among other strategies in the action plan. None of the degraded freeways in Los Angeles County are identified for toll lanes as a possible remediation strategy while all of the freeways so noted are in Orange County. It is my understanding that these vehicles make up approximately one to two percent of the carpool lane users in Orange County. If California were to discontinue use of the carpool lanes by these vehicles, the State would no longer be subject to this Federal legislation. So, we will be faced with the possibility of toll lanes because of a one to two percent usage of HOV lanes by these vehicles. OCTA and Caltrans have made no effort to address this issue with the State or Federal governments. The legislation is being used in an effort to justify toll lanes for the I-405 Improvement Project.

On November 8, you may see the majority of the OCTA Board vote to change Locally Preferred Alternative for the Project from Alternative #1 to Alternative #3, the toll lane option. Alternative 3 adds one general purpose lane in both directions and combines the current carpool lane with a

new express lane (toll lane) in both directions creating a two-lane toll express facility in each direction, similar to the 91 Freeway express lanes. It is possible three or more people per vehicle may be able to use the express facility for free, but otherwise, you will pay a toll to use the express facility. OCTA has indicated the Almond Avenue sound wall will not be relocated for Alternative #1 or Alternative #3. The issues are toll lanes replacing carpool lanes on the I-405 and traffic congestion at the county line.

If you want to express your opinion on this matter, come to the November 8 Board meeting at 9:00 a.m. at the OCTA office at 550 South Main Street in Orange, California. Be sure to complete a public speakers card and turn it in before the meeting begins.

Gary Miller